

Billing Code: 4710-05

Department of State

[Public Notice]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request
for Grant Proposals: Study of the United States Institutes
for Scholars and Secondary Educators

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA/A/E/USS-11-05-09

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.401

Key Dates:

Application Deadline: October 27, 2010

Executive Summary: The Branch for the Study of the United States, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, invites proposal submissions for the design and implementation of five different Study of the United States Institutes to take place over the course of six weeks beginning in June 2011, pending the availability of funds. These Institutes should provide a multinational group of experienced educators with a deeper understanding of U.S. society, culture, values, and institutions.

Four of these Institutes will be for groups of 18 foreign university level faculty, focusing on American Politics and

Political Thought, Contemporary American Literature, Religious Pluralism in the United States, and U.S. Foreign Policy. The fifth Institute will be a general survey course on the study of the United States for a group of 30 foreign secondary educators.

Applicants may propose to submit one proposal to host only one Institute listed under this competition. Should an applicant submit multiple proposals under this competition, all proposals will be declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

I. Funding Opportunity Description:

Authority:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and

achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Purpose: Study of the United States Institutes are intensive academic programs whose purpose is to provide foreign university faculty, secondary educators, and other scholars the opportunity to deepen their understanding of American society, culture, and institutions. The ultimate goal is to strengthen curricula and to improve the quality of teaching about the United States in academic institutions abroad.

The Bureau is seeking detailed proposals for five different Study of the United States Institutes. Applications may be submitted by public and private U.S. colleges, universities, and other not-for-profit academic organizations that have an established reputation in a field or discipline related to the specific program theme, and which meet the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

Overview: Each program should be six weeks in length; participants will spend approximately four weeks at the host institution, and approximately two weeks on an educational study tour, including four to five days in Washington, DC, at the conclusion of the Institute. The educational travel component should directly complement the academic program, and should include visits to cities and other sites of interest in the region around the recipient institution, as well as to another geographic region of the country. The recipient institution also will be expected to provide participants with guidance and resources for further investigation and research on the topics and issues examined during the Institute after they return home.

The Study of the United States Institute on American Politics and Political Thought should provide a multinational group of 18 experienced foreign university faculty and practitioners with a deeper understanding of U.S. political institutions and major currents in American political thought. The Institute should provide the foreign participants insight into how intellectual and political movements have influenced modern American political institutions. The Institute should provide an

overview of political thought during the founding period (constitutional foundations), and the development and current functioning of the American presidency, Congress, and the federal judiciary. The examination of political institutions might be expanded to include the electoral system, political parties and interest groups, the civil service system, media and think tanks, or the welfare/regulatory state. The Institute should address modern political and cultural issues in the United States (including but not limited to civil rights, women's rights, immigration, etc.), and the significance of public discourse in the formulation of public policy. One award of up to \$290,000 will support this Institute.

The Study of the United States Institute on Contemporary American Literature should provide a multinational group of up to 18 experienced foreign university faculty and practitioners with a deeper understanding of U.S. society and culture, past and present, through an examination of contemporary American literature. Its purpose is twofold: 1) to explore contemporary American writers and writing in a variety of genres; and 2) to suggest how the themes explored in those works reflect larger currents within contemporary American society and culture. The program

should explore the diversity of the American literary landscape, examining how major contemporary writers, schools and movements reflect the traditions of the American literary canon. At the same time, the Institute should expose participants to writers who represent a departure from that tradition, and who are establishing new directions for American literature. One award of up to \$290,000 will support this Institute.

The Study of the United States Institute on Religious

Pluralism in the United States should provide a multinational group of up to 18 experienced foreign university faculty and practitioners with a deeper understanding of U.S. society and culture, past and present, through an examination of religious pluralism in the United States and its intersection with American democracy. Employing a multi-disciplinary approach, drawing on fields such as history, political science, sociology, anthropology, law and others where appropriate, the program should explore both the historical and contemporary relationship between church and state in the United States; examine the ways in which religious thought and practice have influenced, and been influenced by, the development of American-style democracy; examine the

intersections of religion and politics in the United States in such areas as elections, public policy, and foreign policy; and explore the sociology and demography of religion in the United States today, including a survey of the diversity of contemporary religious beliefs and its impact on American politics. One award of up to \$290,000 will support this Institute.

The Study of the U.S. Institute on U.S. Foreign Policy

should provide a multinational group of 18 experienced foreign university faculty and practitioners with a deeper understanding of how U.S. foreign policy is formulated and implemented with an emphasis on the post Cold War period. This Institute should begin with a review of the historical development of U.S. foreign policy and cover significant events, individuals, and philosophies that have dominated U.S. foreign policy. In addition, the Institute should explain the role of key players in the field of foreign policy including the executive and legislative branches, the media, public opinion, think-tanks, non-governmental and international organizations and how these players debate, cooperate, influence policy, and are held accountable. Regional sessions, for the entire group, highlighting salient topics such as energy security and

environmental policy in Europe; trade and human rights issues in Asia; foreign aid and humanitarian assistance in Africa; drug trafficking and immigration issues for the Western Hemisphere; and combating terrorism in the Near East and South Asia are among the relevant issues that might be explored. In addition, sessions focusing on current issues such nuclear disarmament, the Middle East peace process, or U.S. military actions would be appropriate. The host institution should provide a comprehensive and cohesive program, ensuring that a diversity of views is presented and remain flexible based on final composition of the participant group. One award of up to \$290,000 will support this Institute.

The Study of the U.S. Institute for Secondary Educators

should provide a multinational group of 30 experienced secondary school educators (teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, textbook writers, or education ministry officials) with a deeper understanding of U.S. society, education, and culture - past and present. The Institute should be organized around a central theme or themes in U.S. civilization and should have a strong contemporary component. Through a combination of traditional, multi-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary

approaches, program content should be imaginatively integrated in order to elucidate the history and evolution of U.S. educational institutions and values, broadly defined. The program should also serve to illuminate contemporary political, social, and economic debates in American society. One award of up to \$360,000 will support this Institute.

Program Design: Each Study of the U.S. Institute should be designed as an intensive, academically rigorous seminar for an experienced group of educators from abroad. Each Institute should be organized through an integrated series of lectures, readings, seminar discussions, and regional travel and site visits, and also should include sessions that expose participants to U.S. pedagogical philosophy and practice for teaching the discipline. Each Institute also should include some opportunity for limited but well-directed independent research. Each program should draw from a diverse disciplinary base, and should itself provide a model of how a foreign university might approach the study of United States.

Applicants are encouraged to design thematically coherent programs in ways that draw upon the particular strengths,

faculty, and resources of their institutions as well as upon the nationally recognized expertise of scholars and other experts throughout the United States.

Participants: Participants will be nominated by U.S. Embassies and Fulbright Commissions from all regions of the world, with final selection made by the Bureau's Branch for the Study of the United States. Every effort will be made to select a balanced mix of male and female participants. Participants will be diverse in terms of age, professional position, and experience abroad. All participants will have a good knowledge of English.

Program Dates: The Institutes should be a maximum of 44 days in length (including participant arrival and departure days) and should begin by June 2011, pending the availability of funds.

Program Guidelines: While the conception and structure of the Institute agenda is the responsibility of the recipient, it is essential that proposals provide a detailed and comprehensive narrative describing the

objectives of the Institute; the title, scope and content of each session; planned site visits; and how each session relates to the overall Institute theme. Proposals must include a syllabus that indicates the subject matter for each lecture, panel discussion, group presentation, or other activity. The syllabus also should confirm or provisionally identify proposed speakers, trainers, and session leaders, and clearly show how assigned readings will advance the goals of each session. Overall, proposals will be reviewed on the basis of their responsiveness to RFGP criteria, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. The accompanying Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document provides program-specific guidelines that all proposals must address fully.

Please note: In a cooperative agreement, the Branch for the Study of the United States is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring. The Branch will assume the following responsibilities for the Institute: participate in the selection of participants; oversee the Institute through one or more site visits; debrief participants in Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the Institute; and engage in follow-on communication with the participants

after they return to their home countries (see POGI document for additional details). The Branch may request that the recipient make modifications to the academic residency and/or educational travel components of the program. The recipient will be required to obtain approval of significant program changes in advance of their implementation.

II. Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under number I above.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2011

Approximate Total Funding: \$1,520,000 (pending the availability of funds)

Approximate Number of Awards: Five (5)

Approximate Average Award: Four awards of \$290,000 for 18 participants each; one award of \$360,000 for 30 participants.

Floor of Award Range: approximately \$290,000

Ceiling of Award Range: \$360,000

Anticipated Award Date: Pending availability of funds, February 1, 2011.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 2012

Additional Information: Pending successful implementation

of these programs and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew these cooperative agreements for two additional fiscal years before openly competing them again.

III.) Eligibility Information:

III.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by public and private U.S. colleges, universities, and other not-for-profit academic organizations that have an established reputation in a field or discipline related to the specific program theme, and which meet the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you

must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with fewer than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$60,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making five awards, four in an amount up to \$290,000, and in one in an amount up to \$360,000 to support the program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with fewer than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

b.) Technical Eligibility: It is the Bureau's intent to award five separate cooperative agreements to five different institutions under this competition. Therefore prospective applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. All applicants must comply with this requirement. Should an applicant submit multiple proposals under this competition, all proposals will be declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

IV.) Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Please contact the Branch for the Study of the United States, ECA/A/E/USS, Fourth Floor, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 2200 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20522-0504, (202) 632-3340 to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/A/E/USS-

11-05-09 located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from grants.gov. Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria, and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Brendan M. Walsh and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/A/E/USS-11-05-09 located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2.html>, or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF - 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the **Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI)** document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1 **ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
ECA/EC/D/PS, SA-5, 5th Floor
2200 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20522-0505

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further
information.

IV.3d.2 **Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into your proposal. Public Law

104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the

program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in

contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.

4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including

survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests for either of the two scholar institutes may not exceed \$290,000, and administrative costs should be no more than approximately \$95,000. Budget requests for the Institute for Secondary Educators may not exceed \$360,000, and administrative costs should be no more than approximately \$110,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- 1) Institute staff salary and benefits
- 2) Participant housing and meals

- 3) Participant travel and per diem
- 4) Textbooks, educational materials, and admissions fees
- 5) Honoraria for guest speakers
- 6) Follow-on programming for alumni of Study of the United States programs.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3F. APPLICATION DEADLINE AND METHODS OF SUBMISSION:

Application Deadline Date: October 27, 2010

Reference Number: ECA/A/E/USS-11-05-09

Methods of Submission:

Applications may be submitted in one of two ways:

- 1.) In hard-copy, via a nationally recognized overnight delivery service (i.e., Federal Express, UPS, Airborne Express, or U.S. Postal Service Express Overnight Mail, etc.), or
- 2.) electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>.

Along with the Project Title, all applicants must enter the above Reference Number in Box 11 on the SF-424 contained in

the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) of the solicitation document.

IV.3f.1 Submitting Printed Applications

Applications must be shipped no later than the above deadline. Delivery services used by applicants must have in-place, centralized shipping identification and tracking systems that may be accessed via the Internet and delivery people who are identifiable by commonly recognized uniforms and delivery vehicles. Proposals shipped on or before the above deadline but received at ECA more than seven days after the deadline will be ineligible for further consideration under this competition. Proposals shipped after the established deadlines are ineligible for consideration under this competition. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of application. It is each applicant's responsibility to ensure that each package is marked with a legible tracking number and to monitor/confirm delivery to ECA via the Internet. Delivery of proposal packages may not be made via local courier service or in person for this competition. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Only proposals submitted as stated above will be considered.

Important note: When preparing your submission please make sure to include one extra copy of the completed SF-424 form and place it in an envelope addressed to "ECA/EX/PM".

The original and six (6) copies of the application should be sent to:

Program Management Division

ECA-IIP/EX/PM

Ref.: ECA/A/E/USS-11-05-09

SA-5, Floor 4

Department of State

2200 C Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20522-0504

IV.3f.2 - Submitting Electronic Applications

Applicants have the option of submitting proposals electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from

transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 7AM - 9PM Eastern Time

Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application

deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation.

Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Optional – IV.3f.3 You may also state here any limitations on the number of applications that an applicant may submit and make it clear whether the limitation is on the

submitting organization, individual program director or both.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. REVIEW PROCESS

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for cooperative agreements resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Quality of Program Plan and Ability to Achieve Program

Objectives: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should demonstrate clearly how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

2. Support for Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (program venue and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, presenters, and resource materials).

3. Evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project

objectives is strongly recommended.

4. **Cost-effectiveness/Cost-sharing:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support, as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

5. **Institutional Track Record/Ability:** Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be fully qualified to achieve the project's goals.

6. **Follow-up and Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should discuss provisions made for follow-up with returned participants as a means of establishing longer-term individual and institutional linkages. Proposals also should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.

VI.) Award Administration Information**VI.1a. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit

Organizations.”

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, “Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.”

OMB Circular A-87, “Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments”.

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. **Reporting Requirements:** You must provide ECA with a hard copy original plus **one** copy of the following reports:

Mandatory:

- 1.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award;
- 2.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 3.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet with all program reports.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application

and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Officer and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Brendan M. Walsh, U.S. Department of State, Branch for the Study of the United States, ECA/A/E/USS, SA-5, Fourth Floor, ECA/A/E/USS-11-05-09, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20522-0503, (202) 632-3340, WalshBM@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/A/E/USS-11-05-09.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition

with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information:

Notice:

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative.

Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding.

Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

Ann Stock

Date

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
Department of State